

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 - 28 (Cancelled)

29. (New) A method for determining the correct Internet Protocol (IP) address for network-connected devices, comprising:

receiving from a target device on the network a request to be assigned an IP address, the request including a Media Access Control (MAC) address associated with the target device;

issuing a query to one or more managed network switches on the network, each switch having a number of ports, where each query specifies the MAC address, and requests that the queried managed network switch report the number of any port on which was received data sent by a device having the specified MAC address;

receiving replies to one or more of the queries; and

in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to a single known IP address, assigning that known IP address to the target device.

30. (New) The method of claim 29 further comprising:

maintaining a database listing one or more devices connected to a network, wherein each listed device has an entry that includes an IP address associated with the listed device, an identity of a managed network switch to which the listed device is associated, and a port number of the managed network switch to which the listed device is associated.

31. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that queried managed network switch corresponds to a known IP address includes matching the one of the queried managed network switches and the port number reported by that queried managed network switch to an entry in the database, thereby identifying the IP address in that entry to be the known IP address.

32. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein the one or more managed network switches each support find port queries as defined in Internet standard document RFC 1493.

33. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein the target device's request to be assigned an IP address complies with the Bootstrap Protocol as defined in Internet standard document RFC 951.

34. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein the target device's request to be assigned an IP address complies with the Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) as defined in Internet standard document RFC 1531.

B 35. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein the queries to the one or more managed network switches complies with management protocol as defined in Internet standard document RFC 1493.

36. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to more than one known IP address, the method further comprises:

sending messages to each device indicated by the one or more known IP addresses, so as to elicit a response from each of those devices currently in service, thereby identifying known IP addresses not in service by lack of response; and in response to determining that there is only a single known IP address not in service, assigning that known IP address to the target device.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein each message sent is an ICMP ECHO or PING request.

38. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein each message sent is a broadcast Address Resolution Protocol (ARP) request.

39. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein each message sent is a unicast Address Resolution Protocol (ARP) request.

40. (New) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
periodically polling devices connected to the network to determine whether the current
status of each device is in service or not in service; and
updating a database with the current status based on the polling.

41. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein in response to determining that one of the
queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to
more than one known IP address, the method further comprises:
consulting the database to identify known IP addresses not in service; and
in response to determining that there is only a single known IP address not in service,
assigning that known IP address to the target device.

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42. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein the polling includes:
sending messages to each device, so as to elicit a response from each of those devices
currently in service, thereby identifying known IP addresses not in service by lack
of response.

43. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein assigning the known IP address to the
target device includes sending a response to the target device, thereby indicating to the target
device that an IP address has been allocated.

44. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein both the target device's request to be
assigned an IP address and the response to the target device complies with the Bootstrap Protocol
as defined in Internet standard document RFC 951.

45. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein both the target device's request to be
assigned an IP address and the response to the target device complies with the Dynamic Host
Configuration Protocol (DHCP) as defined in Internet standard document RFC 1531.

46. (New) A method for determining the correct Internet Protocol (IP) address for
network-connected devices, comprising:

maintaining a database listing one or more devices connected to a network, wherein each listed device has an entry that includes an IP address associated with the listed device, an identity of a managed network switch to which the listed device is associated, and a port number of the managed network switch to which the listed device is associated;

receiving from a target device on the network a request to be assigned an IP address, the request including a Media Access Control (MAC) address associated with the target device;

identifying the MAC address included in the request;

identifying managed network switches associated with devices connected to the network whose IP addresses are listed in the database, thereby identifying target managed network switches, each managed network switch having a number of ports and capable of reporting the port to which a device is attached in response to a find port query specifying that device's MAC address;

issuing a query to each of the target managed network switches, where each query specifies the identified MAC address, and requests that the queried managed network switch report the number of any port on which was received a message sent by a device having the identified MAC address;

analyzing replies to each of the queries to determine if an entry in the database matches one of the queried managed network switches and the port number reported by that switch; and

in response to only one entry matching, assigning the IP address of that entry to the target device.

47. (New) The method of claim 46 wherein in response to more than one entry matching thereby indicating multiple possible IP addresses, the method comprises:

determining that only one of the multiple possible IP addresses is not in service; and
assigning that one IP address to the target device.

48. (New) A method for determining the correct Internet Protocol (IP) address for network-connected devices, comprising:

receiving from a target device on the network a request to be assigned an IP address, the request including a physical address associated with the target device;
issuing a query to one or more managed network switches on the network, each switch having a number of ports, where each query specifies the physical address, and requests that the queried managed network switch report the number of any port on which was received data sent by a device having the specified physical address;
receiving replies to one or more of the queries;
in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to a single known IP address, assigning that known IP address to the target device;
in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to more than one known IP address, determining that only one of the known IP addresses is not in service, and assigning that one known IP address to the target device.

49. (New) The method of claim 48 further comprising:
periodically polling devices connected to the network to determine whether the current status of each device is in service or not in service; and
updating a database with the current status based on the polling.

50. (New) The method of claim 49 wherein in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to more than one known IP address, the method further comprises:
consulting the database to identify known IP addresses not in service.

51. (New) The method of claim 49 wherein the polling includes:
sending messages to each device, so as to elicit a response from each of those devices currently in service, thereby identifying known IP addresses not in service by lack of response.

52. (New) A method for determining the correct Internet Protocol (IP) address for network-connected devices, comprising:

receiving from a target device on the network a request to be assigned an IP address, the request including a physical address associated with the target device, wherein the request complies with at least one of the Internet standard RFC 951 Bootstrap Protocol and the Internet standard RFC 1531 Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP);

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issuing a query to one or more managed network switches on the network, each switch having a number of ports, where each query specifies the physical address, and requests that the queried managed network switch report the number of any port on which was received data sent by a device having the specified physical address, wherein each query complies with management protocol as defined in Internet standard document RFC 1493;

in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to a single known IP address, assigning that known IP address to the target device;

in response to determining that one of the queried managed network switches and a port number reported by that switch corresponds to more than one known IP address, determining that only one of the known IP addresses is not in service, and assigning that one known IP address to the target device.
